



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

JUL 29 2016

OFFICE OF  
AIR AND RADIATION

The Honorable Bill Cassidy, M.D.  
Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Cassidy:

Thank you for your letter dated May 20, 2016, to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Gina McCarthy, in which you requested additional information on the estimates of methane emissions from the oil and gas sector published in the Inventory of U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sinks: 1990-2014 (GHG Inventory), released April 15, 2016. The Administrator asked that I respond on her behalf.

The EPA makes improvements to the GHG Inventory each year as new data become available. For the 2016 GHG Inventory, the EPA conducted a thorough process to consider significant recent advances in the understanding of methane emissions from U.S. oil and gas systems, including information from the EPA's Greenhouse Gas Reporting Program (GHGRP), input from industry, and research studies by government, academic, and industry groups.

The EPA carried out early and extensive engagement and communication with technical experts from within the agency, from other agencies across the federal government, and from industry and external research organizations. The agency hosted a November 19, 2015, workshop<sup>7</sup> for stakeholders on the updates under consideration for the emissions estimates, and then published detailed memos providing more specificity on the updates and requesting stakeholder feedback.<sup>8</sup> In parallel with this focused engagement with oil and gas stakeholders, the EPA conducted its annual 30-day public review period for the draft GHG Inventory, announced via a Federal Register notice on February 22, 2016.<sup>9</sup> The final GHG Inventory provides a thorough description of the changes made across the oil and gas sectors, along with considerations for possible updates to future GHG Inventories.

With the substantial newly available data on methane emissions from oil and gas systems, we now have an improved understanding of emissions in recent years, trends over time, and across the sector. The updated estimates are generally more consistent with findings from recent methane studies, and in particular atmospheric studies that focus on quantification of methane emissions from oil and gas infrastructure in the U.S. Please see the enclosed document for some additional technical information relevant to the questions you asked in your letter.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www3.epa.gov/climatechange/ghgemissions/Nov2015Workshop.html>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www3.epa.gov/climatechange/ghgemissions/usinventoryreport/natural-gas-systems.html>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2016/02/22/2016-03488/inventory-of-us-greenhouse-gas-emissions-and-sinks-1990-2014>

With respect to your request for specific documents and communications, we have initiated an electronic search to identify and collect this material, and will make productions, as appropriate, after reviewing any documents collected.

Thank you for your letter. If you have further questions, please contact me or your staff may contact Kevin Bailey in the EPA's Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations at [bailey.kevinj@epa.gov](mailto:bailey.kevinj@epa.gov) or (202) 564-2998.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Janet G. McCabe".

Janet G. McCabe  
Acting Assistant Administrator

Enclosure